



We the People

"...in the public interest..."

WASHINGTON'S LOCAL BROADCASTERS BRINGING
VOTERS AND CANDIDATES TOGETHER

an election year 2002 report from your local radio and
television stations on their efforts to help voters make
informed decisions. February 2003



Washington

broadcasters

Bringing Community Service Home

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I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

“Local Media is Talking About Local Races. If you turn on a television...you’re going to see political ads and the debates are getting covered.” [Stuart Rothenburg, publisher, The Rothenberg Political Report, as quoted by Jim Rutenberg in the October 24, 2002 *New York Times*]. Television and radio make it possible for all citizens to meet face to face with the key figures in national controversies and local community problems; to hear the arguments first-hand; and, to weigh the candidates and their views on the issues. Questions of foreign policy, economics, law enforcement, the environment, war and peace are examined in formal debates, campaign speeches, news conferences, free time given to candidates in special station programming segments, all brought to the voters by local radio and television stations

80 Years of Political Coverage. Washington radio and television stations have a long history of service in public affairs and political broadcasting. A Seattle station was one of the twenty-seven founders of the first national political broadcast network, which provided coverage of the Coolidge campaign of 1924! Local political broadcasts began even earlier.

Wire-to-Wire/Border-to-Border Coverage. The 2002 elections produced some of the most hotly contested, closest, most intriguing campaigns in memory. With the second highest number of ballots cast ever in a Washington state mid-term election, Washington voters were vigorously engaged from campaign kick-off to election night returns. Local radio and television stations serving Washington’s communities covered the election from the day the first candidates announced their campaigns through the Primary to the wee hours of General Election night. One station even hosted the community’s “Election Night Gala” combining public participation, election returns and interviews with the winning and losing candidates.

Voters Say: “Job Well Done!” “Voters are telling us that local broadcasters are doing a good job of covering campaigns,” said Bill Dalbee, senior research executive for Wirthlin Worldwide. 83% of voters believe that local radio and television stations are providing “about the right amount” of election coverage, or are devoting “too much time” to coverage, in a nationwide poll by Wirthlin Worldwide, conducted between October 25th and 28th, 2002 (margin of error plus or minus 3.5%). Local broadcast coverage of elections, whether in the form of news reports, candidate debates or special free time devoted to unedited candidate statements, was viewed by 44% of all voters as the “most helpful” tool in assisting them in deciding for whom to vote. Paid candidate advertising was listed as “most helpful” by only 8%, in the same Wirthlin survey. “Local stations take seriously their responsibility to provide fair and comprehensive election coverage,” said Barbara Cochran, president of the Radio-Television News Directors Association.

“That’s why they voluntarily offer time to candidates, arrange debates, cover the issues and provide additional information on their web sites.”

Wide Variety of Campaigns Covered. Even though during a mid-term election fewer offices are up for election, Washington broadcasters provided free time for dozens candidates running for elective offices ranging from United States Senator to County Sheriff; from Public Utility District Commissioner to United States Representative; from County Prosecutor to Governor; from State Senator to City Council; from County Clerk to State Representative; from County Auditor to State Supreme Court Justice; and, from statewide Initiatives and a Referendum to local bond levies. Candidates representing major parties, minor parties and heretofore-unknown parties appeared, as did partisans for and against statewide Initiatives and local ballot measures, alike.

In Their Own Words. Candidates took to the air talking directly to voters, in their own words, in debates, live interviews, newscast coverage, taped responses to citizen and reporter questions, and open line voter call-in programs. Many stations added links to their station web sites to further assist voters in gathering additional information about candidates and the election.

Free Time, Freely Given. All of the airtime for the appearances described in this report was provided to the candidates free of charge. Free time, freely given, a part of each station’s obligation to serve the public interest of its community. In every manner, way, shape and form, local broadcasters in Washington went above and beyond the call of duty during the 2002 election cycle, serving the interests of their communities, bringing voters and candidates together.

II. THE RESEARCH

When the 2002 election cycle began, WSAB asked selected stations to keep track of the free, on-air appearances by candidates for public office. In compiling this information, we asked the stations to exclude all paid advertising, either by the candidate’s campaign committee or independent expenditures that addressed a candidate or issues related to a candidate. Using this methodology, WSAB was able to focus on the appearances by the candidates in which they were able to direct information about their views on the issues directly to voters, or in which the voters were able to interact directly with the candidates, without the positioning and filtering of a paid advertising campaign.

III. BRINGING CANDIDATES AND VOTERS TOGETHER

What follows is a description of typical programs on radio and television stations throughout Washington that WSAB discovered in its sampling of stations' efforts to serve the public interest in the critical area of civic education. Some samples are from big market TV and radio stations, other examples highlight the kinds of efforts that are found in small markets. Our compilation is by no means complete. Time and space limitations prevent an exhaustive accounting.

Commitment of Time

KING-TV & KONG-TV, Seattle/KREM-TV, Spokane – Belo Corporation “It’s Your Time.” Since 1996, Belo Corporation, owner of KING-TV and KONG-TV in Seattle and KREM-TV in Spokane, as well as Northwest Cable News, has offered federal candidates five minutes of free airtime through their program “*It’s Your Time*.” Each candidate is given four minutes in which he or she has the opportunity to respond to the question: “Why should the voters cast their vote for you?” The fifth minute is for a response by the candidate to a question from the station that is specific to that candidate’s race. None of the responses is edited; each is broadcast just the way the candidate recorded it. The 4-minute segments are compiled into a full-length program that is broadcast twice on each station in the two weeks prior to the election. The one-minute segment is broadcast within the 12 Noon and 6:30 p. m. newscasts daily beginning approximately three weeks prior to the election. [See below, “Special Programs” for a full listing of the candidates who appeared on “*It’s Your Time*” during the 2002 campaign.]

KIRO-TV, Seattle – Cox Television: “Candidate Access 2002”. “Our goal is to inform voters and invigorate the process,” said Andy Fisher, President of Cox Television, owner of KIRO-TV, Seattle. “Local television is an enormously powerful force in shaping voter opinion, and there are few if any issues more critical than local elections in the markets we serve. This is an important service we can provide to our communities, and we are proud to do it.” Cox Television made a commitment prior to the 2002 election cycle to expanded news coverage of election campaigns, broadcast of debates where available, and one-on-one profile interviews with candidates or ballot measure partisans. In addition, Cox stations provided dedicated coverage of ballot measures, with journalists assigned to report on selected major issues, such as Referendum 51, Initiative 776 or the Seattle Monorail measure. KIRO-TV’s “*Candidate Access 2002*” program offered congressional candidates the ability to record a five-minute segment in which the candidate could address the voters in his or her district on the issues involved in the campaign. [See below, “Special Programs” for a full listing of the candidates who appeared on “*Candidate Access 2002*” during the 2002 campaign.]

KOMO-TV, KVI-AM, KOMO-AM, KPLZ-FM, Seattle/KIMA-TV, Yakima/KEPR-TV, Tri-Cities – Fisher Broadcasting: "Straight Talk". Fisher Broadcasting's radio stations and television stations broadcast a series of special feature segments called "*Straight Talk*," a public service begun in 1996, for political candidates to address voters during local newscasts in the six weeks leading up to the election. "*Straight Talk*" provided each candidate with a 90-second segment, during which each candidate could explain why citizens should vote for him or her. [See below, "Special Programs" for a full listing of the candidates who appeared on "*Straight Talk*" during the 2002 campaign.]

Debates

In a debate, not only can voters discover the positions of the candidates on issues that are important to them, but they get a glimpse of how each candidate reacts under pressure. Washington TV and radio stations broadcast debates between candidates for offices from United States Representative to City Council, and even a debate between local Democratic and Republican Party Chairs.

Congressional Debates

KREM-TV, Spokane, broadcast an hour-long debate between Washington's Fifth District Congressman George Nethercutt and his challenger Bart Haggin. In addition, KREM-TV, which also serves all of Northern Idaho, broadcast separate, one-hour debates for major Idaho elective races, including debates between incumbent Governor Dirk Kempthorne and challenger Jerry Brady; Congressman Butch Otter and challenger Betty Richardson; and, incumbent Idaho United States Senator Larry Craig and challenger Alan Blinks.

KGW-AM/FM, Olympia, hosted and broadcast live a ninety-minute debate between Third District incumbent Congressman Brian Baird and challenger State Senator Joe Zarelli. The debate was broadcast from the Olympia Center in front of a live audience. KGW covered the entire debate live, with no commercial interruptions.

Local Debates

KAYU-TV, Spokane, broadcast debates focused on the extremely close race for the Sixth Legislative District Senate seat, the Sixth District State House Seats, and on the first-ever election of a city council in the newly formed city of Spokane Valley. The debates were moderated by KAYU-TV news anchor Linda Stratton, and the panel of questioners included KAYU-TV reporter Dan Mitchinson, reporter Jim Camden of the *Spokane Spokesman-Review* newspaper and Pia Hansen of *The Inlander*. In the legislative debates, the candidates were asked questions by the panelists and then had the opportunity to ask each other a question, before making closing statements. In the city

council debates, each of the 14 candidates fielded questions for seven minutes. The entire 90 minutes of debates was broadcast twice by the station on the Sunday and Monday immediately preceding Election Day.

KXLE-AM/FM, Ellensburg, *Around the Valley* program carried twenty-minute debates between candidates for several county elected positions. Host Richard James posed questions to candidates for County Assessor, County Clerk, County Treasurer and Sheriff on separate editions of “*Around the Valley*.”

KXLY-AM, Spokane, broadcast a two-hour live candidate forum featuring all 14 candidates for the seven city council seats in the newly formed city of Spokane Valley. Listeners’ interest was extremely high in this particular election because the incorporation of the city of Spokane Valley had just been approved at a prior election and this was the City’s first city council election. The debate was broadcast live from 3 p.m. to 5 p.m. during the highly-rated afternoon drive segment of the day.

KMAS-AM, Shelton, carried a live, two-hour “town meeting” two weeks before the election that broadcast debates to its Mason County listeners. Included in the debates were candidates for Mason County Public Utility District Commissioner; County Commissioner; and, all six candidates for both 35th Legislative District State House of Representative seats and the 35th Legislative District State Senate seat.

KPQ, Wenatchee, broadcast the Chelan County Candidates’ Forum, live and direct from the performing arts center. This two-hour evening broadcast was hosted by KPQ’s News Director.

KXLY-AM, Spokane, featured local Democratic Party Chair Marianne Shackert and local Republican Party Chair Rob Greer on its afternoon newscast on Election Day. They discussed and debated the issues with KXLY’s news anchors during the drive-home time of the day.

Special Candidate Access Programs

Many stations put together a package of opportunities for candidates to appear in their own words, unfiltered by advertising techniques, newscast time constraints, debate rules, or other limiting factors. Just the candidate, pure and simple. And free.

“It’s Your Time, Seattle.” KING-TV, Seattle, offered every Democratic and Republican candidate for Congress, in every one of the seven congressional districts covered by the station’s signal, the opportunity to prepare a one-minute taped segment that was broadcast immediately following KING 5’s Noon and 6:30 p.m. newscasts, during the three weeks preceding the election. In addition, each candidate was able to

“...in the public interest...”



expand his or her statement to up to four minutes, all of which were compiled into a one-hour special that was broadcast by KING-TV on October 28th and repeated on sister station KONG-TV the following evening.

“It’s Your Time, Spokane.” In Spokane, Belo Corporation’s KREM-TV also broadcast candidates’ statements as part of Belo’s *“It’s Your Time”* project. KREM 2’s *“It’s Your Time”* segments provided candidates with the same four and one-minute segments as sister stations KING-TV and KONG-TV provided for Western Washington congressional candidates. In addition, because KREM 2’s coverage area includes all of Northern Idaho, *“It’s Your Time”* included the candidates in the Idaho Governor’s race; Idaho’s 1st Congressional District; and, the candidates for United States Senator from Idaho.

“Straight Talk, Seattle” All but one of the candidates for Washington’s 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 6th, 7th, 8th, and 9th Congressional District seats were featured on *“Straight Talk.”* News watchers are voters, so *“Straight Talk”* segments were broadcast as a part of KOMO-TV’s newscasts, thus giving candidates their target audience – free of charge. Fisher’s KVI-AM, KOMO-AM, and KPLZ-FM (Star 101.5), Seattle, broadcast the same *“Straight Talk”* segments that aired on KOMO-TV. KVI-AM and KPLZ-FM utilized their weekly public affairs program, *“Pulse of Puget Sound”* to air all of the candidates’ segments in a special program on the Sunday prior to the election. KOMO-AM broadcast the segments separately as a part of its all-news programming.

“Straight Talk, Yakima/Tri-Cities.” Fisher Broadcasting’s Yakima TV station, KIMA-TV, provided free time to Central Washington candidates for Congress from the 4th District; the State Legislature in the 14th and 15th Districts; and, many local elected positions in Kittitas and Yakima Counties, including Kittitas County Clerk, Assessor and Sheriff; and, Yakima County Commissioner, District Court Judge, Auditor and Prosecutor in their *“Straight Talk”* segments. These messages were broadcast at the end of the station’s newscasts. The segments were provided free of charge and were produced at the station if the candidate needed that kind of assistance. Fisher Broadcasting’s Tri-Cities station, KEPR-TV, also broadcast the *“Straight Talk”* segments recorded by 4th Congressional District incumbent Doc Hastings and his opponent Craig Mason.

“It’s Your Turn.” In Wenatchee, KPQ Radio broadcast a series of one-hour programs, *“It’s Your Turn,”* *“A Matter of Opinion,”* and *“Return to America”* in the weeks leading up to the November election. These programs, broadcast from 3 p.m. to 4 p.m., featured debates between candidates for Chelan County Commissioner, Chelan County Public Utility District Commissioner and 12th District State Representative. KPQ’s news anchors moderated the debates and interviewed the candidates. In addition, the candidates took calls directly from the public and answered their questions.

In-Depth Look at Referendum 51. Belo Corporation’s KING-TV/KONG-TV, Seattle and KREM-TV in Spokane co-produced and broadcast a full one-hour special, in-depth, look at Washington’s controversial Referendum 51 transportation funding ballot measure. This special report explored all sides of the issue with spokespersons from various interested advocacy groups. The combination of Belo’s Seattle and Spokane stations, plus Northwest Cable News, provided statewide coverage for this important issue.

“Candidate Access 2002”/KIRO-TV, Seattle. Seattle’s KIRO-TV produced and broadcast a 90-minute program that presented the Democratic, Republican and Libertarian candidates each of Western Washington’s seven congressional races. *KIRO 7 Special: Candidates for Congress*,” hosted by KIRO-TV’s Senior Political Reporter, Essex Porter, aired from 2:30 p. m. to 4:00 p.m. on the Sunday prior to the election. Each candidate’s segment ran five-minutes, was pre-taped and broadcast unedited during the special program.

Holding the Candidates Accountable: “Ad Watch.” Some stations did in-depth analysis of candidates’ claims and promises. Many did this in the context of their news coverage of specific campaign appearances. KING-TV, Seattle, news reporter Robert Mak produced and hosted a special feature, called “Ad Watch” designed to provide viewers with facts that could help them sort through the claims made by in selected political ads aired prior to the General Election.

Newscasts

Local broadcast coverage of elections, whether in the form of news reports, candidate debates or special, free time devoted to unedited candidate statements, was viewed by 44% of all voters as the “most helpful” tool in assisting them in deciding for whom to vote, according to a nationwide poll by Wirthlin Worldwide, conducted between October 25th and 28th, 2002 (margin of error plus or minus 3.5%).

It would be hard to find a station that did not cover the candidates, their positions and campaigns in their newscasts. Even music intensive stations delivering country and western, oldies, rock, or the myriad other music forms available today, include campaign coverage in their regular newscasts. Here’s how some Washington broadcasters used their prime news vehicle, the regularly scheduled newscast, to inform voters.

KHQ-TV, Spokane, found itself in the middle of a rare election occasion: The election of a city council for the very first time in a brand new city. The newly incorporated city of Spokane Valley held its first election for a city council in 2002. KHQ-TV focused a great deal of time covering the issues in this emerging city, and ensuring its newly enfranchised citizens access to the views held by a flock of city council candidates. KHQ-TV broadcast nearly 50 stories and appearances by candidates for the Spokane

Valley City Council during its newscasts in the weeks leading up to the November election. In addition, Q-6 News provided extensive coverage of the 5th Congressional District race between incumbent George Nethercutt and challenger Bart Haggin; the hotly contested 6th Legislative District State Senate race between incumbent Jim West and challenger Laurie Dolan; and, controversial statewide ballot measures Initiative 776 and Referendum 51.

KCPQ-TV, Seattle, conducted in-studio interviews with advocates and opponents of several critical ballot measures. The interviews were broadcast live as part of Q-13 Morning News. Issue partisans interviewed by the Morning News anchor included Washington Governor Gary Locke, leading the pro-Referendum 51 campaign. Other campaign leaders who were subject to Q-13's in-studio interview supported or opposed Initiative 776, Referendum 51 and Seattle's Monorail ballot measure.

KMAS-AM, Shelton, in addition to live broadcasts of candidate debates, provided its audience with the most important moments from those debates throughout the weeks leading up to the November election by repeating them during its regularly scheduled newscasts. KMAS provided citizens who could not attend or listen to the live coverage of the debates with many additional opportunities to hear the views of the candidates. These KMAS newscasts included 6th Congressional District incumbent Norm Dicks and challenger Bob Lawrence; Mason County Commissioner candidates Jayni Kamin and Ross Gallagher; 35th Legislative District State Representative candidates Kathy Haigh, Frank Dare, William Eikmeyer and Craig Chapman; 35th Legislative District State Senate candidates Marilou Rickert and Tim Sheldon. In addition, KMAS broadcast taped interviews with many candidates during its newscasts, including candidates for Mason County Auditor, Mason County District Court Judge and advocates on all sides of Referendum 51 and Initiative 776.

KXLY-TV, Spokane, offered free time to a total of 16 candidates during the month leading up to the November election. Each candidate was interviewed live, in-studio by the KXLY-TV News anchors for three minutes during KXLY's primary evening newscast. Included among the candidates who appeared in these special election interviews were Phil Harris and Louis Chadez, candidates for Spokane County Commission; George Nethercutt, Bart Haggin and Rob Chase, candidates for Washington's 5th Congressional District seat; Alan Blinken, a candidate for the U. S. Senate in Idaho; Betty Richardson, a candidate for Idaho's 1st Congressional District seat; Jim West and Laurie Dolan, candidates for Washington's 6th Legislative District Senate seat; and Jerry Bradley, a candidate for Governor of Idaho.

Who's Coming to Town? Often, stories in newscasts about upcoming local campaign visits by candidates might seem to be little more than promotional announcements for a candidate's appearance. But those news stories, heralding the local appearance of a

candidate, serve to notify listeners and viewers of yet another way in which they can inform themselves and make better election decisions.

Talk Radio

Love it or hate it, say what you want about it, talk radio is the people's soapbox. It allows everyone to express his or her opinion, sometimes at their own peril. It also delivers political candidates directly to the voters in a way that no other medium, no other forum, can. Talk radio stations can be found in every market in Washington state; several in the larger cities. In smaller communities, stations with a mixture of programming often have a local talk show component to their offerings. Local broadcasters offer listeners the unfettered chance to sound off about the candidates and issues of the day, and they are not hesitant to do so. The rough and tumble path of politics runs right through local radio talk shows.

Small Market Radio Brings Campaigns Home

Radio stations in smaller communities were highly active in bringing candidates and issues into their listeners' lives. More than any other business, small market radio stations are a basic part of the fabric of the community.

“The Dick Pust Morning Show on KGY, Olympia.” Every morning, every day of the week, KGY-AM morning host, Dick Pust, invites a guest to be the focus of a 15-minute interview in prime morning drive time. During campaign season, Dick interviews candidates for local, state and federal offices. During the 2002 campaign, he devoted an entire 15-minute interview, separately each, to both incumbent Third District Congressman Brian Baird and his challenger Joe Zarelli. Pust also devoted two separate interviews to Ninth Congressional District incumbent Congressman Adam Smith and one of his opponents, John Mills. Smith's other opponent declined to appear.

“Let's Talk About It” on KELA, Centralia. Without local radio's dedication to bringing candidates and voters together, the only alternative for candidates to get their messages out in many communities is the Letters to the Editor column in the local newspaper. KELA-AM in Centralia opened its morning discussion program *“Let's Talk About It”* to candidates for Lewis County Commissioner and Lewis County Coroner. *“Let's Talk About It”* is broadcast Monday through Friday from 8:30 to 9 in the morning. Typically, the program provides a candidate fifteen minutes in prime morning drive time. The candidates field questions from listeners and the show's moderator about their positions on issues affecting Lewis County residents.

“The Brett & Debbie Show” on KGMI, Bellingham. Between 8 and 9 every weekday morning, Brett & Debbie, on KGMI in Bellingham, spend an hour informing their

listeners about interesting and important issues in Northwest Washington. During the campaign season, KGMI and Brett & Debbie ensured that their listeners would have the knowledge to make informed decisions at the polls. On October 29th, both candidates for Washington’s Second Congressional District seat, incumbent Rick Larsen and challenger Norma Smith participated in the Brett & Debbie Show. For nearly an hour, Brett & Debbie interviewed the candidates and local callers were able to speak to the candidates directly and ask the things that the listeners wanted to know. KGMI’s signal covers the entire 42nd Legislative District and the station realized the importance of the very hotly contested State Senate seat and both State House seats in that District. Brett & Debbie brought KGMI’s listeners together with the candidates for all three of those races. On October 25th, incumbent State Senator Georgia Gardner and challenger Dale Brandland shared a 50-minute segment, taking voters’ calls and answering questions. On October 21st and October 30th, candidates for the State House seats in the 42nd District faced off.

Mount Vernon Town Meetings Live on KAPS, Mount Vernon. KAPS, Mount Vernon partnered with the League of Women Voters of Skagit County to host a live broadcast of their community’s series of candidate town forums. The events were broadcast live throughout the campaign season for both the primary and general elections on KAPS. The KAPS News Department provided the moderators for the forums, which featured candidates for Skagit County Clerk, Skagit County Sheriff, Skagit County Auditor, Skagit County Prosecutor, Skagit County Commissioner, both State House seats in the 10th and 40th Legislative Districts, and all 6 candidates for Washington’s 2nd Congressional District seat.

Sometimes It’s Tough To Get Candidates on the Air

Any requirement that radio and television stations broadcast a minimum amount of “candidate-centered discourse” will carry with it an obligation for candidates, as well as broadcasters. Broadcasters can only provide as much exposure on their stations as candidates are willing to accept. If stations had to meet such a requirement, the refusal of a candidate to appear on a station’s newscast for an interview or participate in special free time programming such as “*It’s Your Time*,” or “*Straight Talk*” could place the station in jeopardy of violating the minimum requirement of “candidate-centered discourse.” Unfortunately, during the 2002 campaign, many candidates were unable to accept station invitations to participate in their “candidate-centered discourse” programming.

In the Tri-Cities, the “*Straight Talk*” segments on Fisher’s KEPR-TV were offered to all candidates several times. The only candidate to accept KEPR-TV’s offer was Bob Biles, a candidate for Walla Walla County Commissioner. Even the response rate from the others was very poor. KRKO-AM, Everett, issued an open invitation to the Snohomish County Prosecutor to debate his opponent, live on the station for two hours. The

incumbent was unable to appear and the debate never happened. KRKO offered debate time to congressional candidates, but the candidates did not accept that invitation.

KXLY-TV, Spokane, offered the opportunity to many candidates to appear live, on the station's 5 o'clock newscast for a three-minute interview. While many accepted, incumbent Idaho Governor Dirk Kempthorne declined, as did incumbent Idaho United States Senator Larry Craig, even though their opponents appeared, and the only source of broadcast TV in all of Northern Idaho is from the Spokane stations.

Of the twelve candidates in Western Washington congressional districts that were invited by Fisher Broadcasting in Seattle to participate in “*Straight Talk*,” the stations were successful in getting 11 on-the-air, but one declined the invitation.

Expanding the Reach of Broadcasters' Efforts

Coverage for Two States: Spokane Stations Do Double Duty. Spokane broadcasters provide the primary radio and television service, not only to their Spokane listeners and viewers, but to all of Northern Idaho, as well. Stations there routinely offer free airtime to candidates for local, state and federal offices, and ballot measure campaigns in both Washington and Idaho. This year, in addition to their coverage of Washington campaigns, Spokane broadcasters provided free airtime for candidates in the Idaho gubernatorial race, the race for one of Idaho's United States Senate seats and for Idaho's 1st Congressional District seat.

Web Sites. The Internet has become the research engine for political issues in America. Broadcasters have embraced this new tool as another way to serve the public interest of their communities.

Streaming. Stations all across Washington are streaming their signals on the Internet. Just click and listen. During the campaign season, coverage is now available in both audio and video files streaming live, and in some cases, archived for later review from many radio and TV stations in Washington. Belo Corporation's Washington stations, KING-TV and KONG-TV, Seattle and KREM-TV, Spokane posted all of the material from their “*It's Your Time*” series on their web sites.

Links. The Internet has also allowed stations to provide listeners and viewers with direct links to candidates' web sites, voter information, government sites regarding elections, voter registration and election returns. During their newscasts or other campaign related programming, radio and television stations in small communities and large markets throughout Washington encourage citizens avail themselves of this outstanding opportunity.

KCPQ-TV, Seattle provided links on its web site to general election information. KXLY-TV and Radio in Spokane placed on its web site links to all local election web

sites so that voters could easily access sample ballots and voters guides. KMAS, Shelton, transcribed the comments made by candidates in the debates KMAS broadcast and put those transcripts on its web site. Cox Television stations, owner of KIRO-TV, Seattle, created special areas on their web sites where voters could easily access all candidate web sites and other information related to local elections and campaign issues.

These links expand the stations' coverage of campaigns with a level of detail that reporters cannot include, and viewers do not want, in a regular newscast report. However, viewers can regularly log onto stations' web sites and follow links when they have more time to investigate these issues on their own, or when they want a specific piece of information about a candidate or a candidate's position on an issue.

The Networks. Local broadcasters bring the experience, insight and resources of the national broadcast network news organizations into our living rooms. No local station can match the on-going resources for coverage that the networks have. But by bringing network reporting to local audiences, hometown broadcasters are delivering in yet another way on their commitment to serve the public interest.

Cable News Channels. Belo Broadcasting's Northwest Cable News Channel, carried throughout Washington, Idaho and Oregon, extends the reach of Belo's Seattle and Spokane stations, and allows its news organization to present more in-depth coverage of campaign issues and events. Viewers throughout the region benefit from the resource sharing between Northwest Cable News and Belo's free, over-the-air stations, KING-TV and KONG-TV, Seattle and KREM-TV, Spokane. In addition, the combination of these stations and Northwest Cable News can carry debates broadcast by the Belo TV stations, either live or on a tape delay basis, offering Northwest viewers additional opportunities to hear candidates' views on issues. Cross-promotion of these repeat showings ensures that viewers do not miss out on an important campaign replay.

Get Out The Vote. Washington radio and TV stations in virtually every community take on the task of getting out the vote. In responding to earlier surveys, broadcasters have indicated that they work with local organizations, such as the League of Women Voters, to mount organized campaigns to increase voter registration and turnout. Cox Television stations, owner of KIRO-TV, Seattle, began a voter registration initiative on July 4, 2002, encouraging citizens to register to vote and to be certain to cast their ballot. Most stations frequently remind voters to be sure to vote in the days leading up to the election. These reminders are nearly constant during Election Day. Every time a station reports on projected voter turnout, listeners and viewers are reminded of the time remaining for the polls to be open and are urged to cast their ballot. Many stations also work with community groups to publicize ways for people to get to the polls if they need help.

Secretary of State Legal Notice Advertising Program. Nearly every commercial radio station in Washington participated in the 2002 Washington Secretary of State Legal Notice Advertising of State Measures Program. In the clatter and din of candidate and

initiative campaigns, some lesser-known, but vitally important issues might be overlooked, except for Washington broadcasters' commitment to serve the public interest through their participation in the Legal Notice Ad Program. Although the Secretary of State can afford to buy only a small amount of commercial ad time to publicize proposed statewide ballot measures (as required by the State Constitution and state law), Washington radio stations are committed to running additional spots, at no charge, to increase awareness of these critical measures. These announcements, which are broadcast during the two weeks immediately preceding the November election, also remind citizens to review their Voters Pamphlet, to study it carefully and thoroughly before voting. Spanish-speaking voters are not forgotten; the spots are broadcast in both Spanish and English.

Lose A Little On Each Sale; Make It Up In Volume. Candidates, their committees and their supporters spent a record amount of money on paid advertising during the 2002 election cycle. There were more contested races, even for the Washington State Supreme Court. There were more candidates, as the Libertarians fielded candidates in every Washington congressional race, and several minor party candidates qualified for the November ballot in many races. The campaign season was the longest in memory, if not in history.

But, despite the eye-popping number of dollars spent on political campaigns, if anybody got rich off of candidate spending, it certainly was not radio and television stations. Free, over-the-air broadcasters must sell every candidate spot at the station's "lowest unit charge." Even without demand for airtime from political campaigns, most stations would be "sold out" selling spots to their regular advertisers, at much higher rates. So, every time a candidate's spot is broadcast, a spot for which the station receives only a fraction of the revenue is replacing a much costlier, regular advertiser's spot. Contrasted with a comparable period with no candidate advertising, the stations are losing significant revenue.

Recognition

Citizen groups recognize the value of broadcasters' commitment to serving the public interest. The following letter is typical of the kind of appreciation broadcasters throughout the state receive after campaign seasons, whether in Presidential election years or when the biggest office on the ballot is for the city council.

Dear Jerry -

11-11-02 •

On behalf of the League of Women Voters of Skagit County, I thank you for the important role KBRC/KAPS Radio & you had in making our 2002 Political Forum season such a large success! Not only did we experience record setting crowds; we had many favorable comments from audience members & candidates.

We are gratified each year to be able to put on these

Candidate nights & know we wouldn't be able to reach as many people as we do without you & the radio station.

As we wait for the final election outcome, we can all be pleased that we had a vital role in educating the public in the 2002 vote!

We look forward to working with you again.

Sincerely,

Dee Raudabaugh
LWV of Skagit County
Forum Committee

**Before the
Federal Communications Commission
Washington, D. C. 20554**

In the Matter of:

Broadcast Localism

To the Commission:

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MB Docket No. 04-233

**COMMENTS OF THE
WASHINGTON STATE ASSOCIATION OF BROADCASTERS**

EXHIBIT F

“...in the public interest.”

6th ed.

**A FURTHER REPORT ON SERVICE
TO OUR COMMUNITIES FROM
YOUR WASHINGTON STATE BROADCASTERS**

June 2004

WSAB

**Washington State Association of
Broadcasters**



Washington

broadcasters

Bringing Community Service Home

“...in the public interest.”

WSAB

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I. Executive Summary

“...in the public interest.” Those words, added to the Communications Act by Washington’s own United States Senator C. C. Dill, form the common commitment of community service among Washington’s free, over-the-air broadcasters, whether they are radio or television stations, large or small, commercial or public, serving communities in Eastern or Western Washington. Washington’s broadcasters play a vital and active role in the lives of every Washington community, every day. And we are proud of the good work we do for our neighbors.

The Washington State Association of Broadcasters and the National Association of Broadcasters have just completed a survey of, and interviews with, television and radio stations in Washington to determine the extent of station engagement in public service and community activities during calendar year 2003.

86% of Washington’s commercial TV stations participated in the survey; and, 116 of the 194 commercial radio stations (60%) replied. The overall response rate (radio and TV combined) was 62%. Here’s a snapshot of what we found:

- Radio and television stations across Washington raised more than \$20.3 Million during 2003 for charities, charitable causes or needy individuals. And that’s just the cash. It does not include donations of clothing, blankets, food, and other goods and services raised by the stations in their donation drives.
- An average of 57% of TV PSA time is devoted to local issues; for radio, 69% of PSA time is locally oriented.
- 80% of Washington television stations and all responding radio stations helped charities, charitable causes or needy individuals through fund-raising and other types of support.
- TV stations in Washington typically broadcast approximately 129 Public Service Announcements; radio stations 264 PSAs, in a typical week.
- The cumulative statewide totals based on the reported rate charged for commercial spots of similar length based on these data show the total PSA value for Washington stations during 2003 was more than \$20.7 Million for TV stations and more than \$166.3 Million for radio stations..
- The leading topics of Public Service Campaigns conducted by Washington broadcasters included: Health issues; poverty, hunger, homeless issues; health issues; and, children’s issues.



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- Hundreds of local community organizations benefited from Washington broadcasters' community service efforts, including the United Way, the American Cancer Society, the American Red Cross, the Children's Miracle Network, Vanessa Behan Crisis Nursery, Northwest Harvest, Boys & Girls Clubs, Salvation Army, Mid-Columbia Reading Foundation, Puget Sound Blood Center, Children's Hospital and Medical Center, the Alzheimer's Association, Children's Home Society of Washington, libraries, Second Harvest, YWCA, Habitat for Humanity, and many, many more.
- 95% of TV stations and 87% of radio stations ran PSAs addressing children's issues;
80% of TV stations and 83% of radio stations ran PSAs addressing drunk driving;
95% of TV stations and 88% of radio stations ran PSAs addressing violence;
75% of TV stations and 88% of radio stations ran PSAs addressing drug abuse; and,
70% of TV stations and 68% of radio stations ran PSAs addressing homeland security issues.

Statistics alone cannot tell the whole story of how Washington broadcasters contribute to the quality of life in their communities. The second part of WSAB's research program was a series of interviews with the General Managers and Community Relations Directors of television and radio stations around the state. The creativity and imagination stations show in responding to the needs of their communities is astonishing:

- ❖ We discovered that nearly every station has made tremendous efforts to support America's Armed Forces personnel abroad, focusing on troops from their own communities.
- ❖ We found a market in which every station has joined in a community-wide effort to revitalize their town.
- ❖ We encountered a major market which holds monthly meetings to ascertain the needs of its community, and other stations that ascertain their community's needs in unique and effective ways.

The stations have also heard from their viewers and listeners. We found dozens of compelling, heart-warming accounts of how radio and television stations touch the lives of individuals every day. Collecting these stories made it clearer than ever that those who live and work in the community truly know best how to serve their communities.

It is those stories that follow.



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II. Quantitative Research Findings

“How Much Washington Broadcasters Do For Their Communities”

Introduction

Broadcasters have a mandate to serve the public interest of the communities in which they operate. Given the diversity of communities in the United States, there is a multitude of needs which could be and are addressed over the public airwaves by broadcasters. Indeed, broadcasters are recognizably in a very unique position – every station in the country is a local station and very much a part of the community it is licensed to serve.

Public affairs activities are an integral part of broadcast stations' community involvement. Through public affairs activities, stations help increase awareness of issues that affect their audiences. Radio and television broadcasters invest both programming and non-programming time and efforts to educate and involve their communities. Programming activities include, but are not limited to, public service announcements wherein stations donate valuable commercial time for messages alerting the public about health threats and other issues. Stations also produce public affairs programs featuring in-depth discussions of problems and remedies. In addition to these programming efforts, broadcasters initiate or are involved in many activities and community groups aimed at educating and involving their communities.

While the ways in which broadcasters are involved in their communities may seem similar, every local broadcaster's efforts are different. Public service campaigns undertaken by stations nationwide integrate on-air and off-air efforts. Additionally, since each station cannot address every need of its given community as its top priority, stations each focus on different needs, thus addressing overall the diversity of issues within a community. In any given community, the local broadcasters' unique responses and approaches to the diversity of issues is also supplemented by major national efforts.

The Washington State Association of Broadcasters, in partnership with the National Association of Broadcasters, conducted a survey of television and radio stations in Washington State to determine the extent of station participation in public affairs activities. A variety of methodologies were employed to reach stations – with mail, fax, and Internet surveys sent out between January and April 2004. The response rate of Washington State broadcasters was 62%, as 18 of the 21 commercial television stations licensed to the state (86%) are represented in the data, as are 116 of the 194 radio stations (60%).

The census revealed that Washington State radio and television stations contributed approximately 227 million dollars worth of service to their communities during 2003. The data were collected, tabulated and analyzed by Public Opinion Strategies, an Alexandria, Virginia-based opinion research firm.

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Donating Time, Raising Money, and Responding to Community Needs

- o Using mean figures to derive a per-station total, responding Washington State TV stations report running approximately 129 PSAs per week, with radio stations running 264. These figures combine all PSA spot times – from ten seconds or less up to 60 second PSAs. Using the reported rate charged for each of these spot lengths, these PSAs translate into a mean cumulative amount of \$985,764 a year per TV station responding, and \$857,376 per radio station responding.

The cumulative statewide totals based on these data show the total PSA value for Washington State TV stations as \$20,701,044 and \$166,330,944 for radio stations.

- o A vast majority of responding TV stations (80%) and all responding radio stations (100%) say they help charities, charitable causes or needy individuals by fund-raising or offering some other support. The mean amount raised by these TV stations was \$1,210,000, with responding radio stations reporting a mean of \$101,836. The projected cumulative amounts for this charitable giving is \$20,328,000 for TV stations and \$19,756,184 for radio stations who conducted some fundraising during the time period examined.

The charitable amount raised by responding TV stations ranged from \$20,000 to \$10,900,000, with a range among radio stations of \$300 to \$1,875,000. Broadcasters in Washington state also reported raising over \$300,000 in direct contributions or pledges related to disaster relief during 2003.

- o Almost four-in-ten (39%) of responding Washington State radio stations and 26% of the television stations were involved in either on-air campaigns – either through local news broadcasts, PSAs, or public affairs programming – or off-air activities to aid the victims of disasters.
- o PSAs also focus largely on local issues. Among responding TV stations, respondents say that an average of 57% of PSA time is devoted to local issues; the percentage of PSAs devoted to local issues among responding radio stations was 69%.

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Broadcasters Addressing Important Topics

- o The following table examines some specific issues and the response by responding stations. As in previous years, broadcasters continue to devote time and resources to addressing important and relevant topics. Each respondent was asked to respond whether their station aired PSAs, locally produced public affairs programs/segments (not including news broadcasts), or news segments on each of the following topic areas. The numbers here are the percentages of all state TV and radio stations who say they have addressed a particular topic through one of those methods:

Issue	TV			Radio		
	PSA	PA Program	News Segment	PSA	PA Program	News Segment
AIDS	50%	10%	65%	50%	29%	56%
Alcohol abuse	80%	20%	70%	73%	36%	62%
Adult educ./literacy	70%	20%	65%	78%	45%	68%
Anti-crime	90%	20%	75%	82%	53%	72%
Anti-smoking	55%	25%	60%	76%	34%	62%
Anti-violence	95%	25%	75%	88%	47%	71%
Breast cancer/other women's health	85%	30%	70%	87%	42%	68%
Children's issues	95%	40%	75%	87%	54%	66%
Drinking during pregnancy	10%	5%	30%	21%	25%	47%
Drunk driving	80%	15%	70%	83%	47%	70%
Drug use/abuse	75%	30%	60%	88%	48%	66%
Homeland security issues	70%	20%	70%	68%	48%	65%
Hunger/poverty/homelessness	90%	50%	70%	90%	51%	68%
Fund raising drives	80%	30%	65%	94%	63%	66%